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THE GREAT FOOL.

"Amongst the pleasing reveries that crowd a cultured mind at ease, few are more kindly entertained than those that savour of the daily doings of our old English households: they may be likened to links in the social chain that unite the present and the past, and hold affiance to the love of our country.

"Would that our chroniclers of old, had given us, for every page of coronations, royal weddings, births and deaths of princes, with knightly tournaments, and wars their prototypes, and all that appertains to courts, and camps, at least another page, touching the more genial events of common life.

"Chaucer has shown us what men were in his time; society abounded in character then, as now. Every city, town, and village, performed its daily drama, in which each one played his part.

"Who more holy than the prior? who more jovial than the monks? When not at mass, they might be found at the hostelry hard by, teaching mine host how to choose good sack, and mine hostess how to season venison pasty; he being somewhat of a homely wit, and she a bawdy dame. Then the bench bore corpulent justices, and bodies-corporate grew fat at the mayor's feast. Then attorneys-at-law, scrupulous to the very letter, o'er the

parchment, met neighbour, neighbourly at the inn. Barons were then right lordly, maintaining open hospitality, and their ladies courteous and bounteous to the poor. Esquires were brave abroad, frank, generous, and noisy as their beagles; when at home, cracking fair maiden's ear-strings with loud tallihoes: self-grudging misers there were, and self-loving extortioners; but these were shunned. Then there were humourists of every degree, in high life, and in low; each wearing his humour as a badge. The schoolmaster and the rhymers; the priest and pot-cary, the sexton and the pinder; the smith and the cord-wainer; the miller and the malster; the tanner and the tinker; the weaver and the tailor; the millwright, carpenter, and mason; little confraternities, neighbours in good fellowship. Yea, a congregate of character, the thrifty and the thriftless; the sober and the sottish; the joyous and the moody; the phlegmatic and warm-hearted; the sprightly and the grave, all mingling, and helping to drive on the daily system of life, through all its social ramifications, and congenial dependencies.

"That these diurnal doings were done in days of yore, we know; but, vain would now be our regret, at not knowing more of these the daily doings of our worshipful forefathers.



THE COURT FOOL.

"Amongst other eccentrics of former days, was that merry wight, ycleped *Jester*, and his no less sprightly coeval, the *Motley-fool*; whose frolics, gibes, and jeers were the delight and the talk of all, whilst few, even among the writers contemporary, had the kindness to record their witty sayings, for the entertainment of posterity.

"Master John Heywood was one of those cognomened *Jester*, a character not to be confounded with that of *Patch*, or *Fool*. *Killegrew*, a man of letters also, was commonly so designated, as one of the leading wits of Charles the Second's court.

"Heywood doubtless was a master-wit; it were sufficient to establish this to know, that he was the delight of Sir Thomas More, who frequently entertained him at his seat at Chelsea, and exchanged many a lively joke with Master John. He himself, indeed, kept a Fool in his own house, whose portrait was introduced by Holbein into his celebrated picture of the *More family*."

The above wood-cut, we are informed, is a fac simile of a portrait of a Court Fool, selected from a group of those prankish wights, sketched by the masterly hand of Albert Durer.